

3 Customer Experience Mistakes You'll Never Make Again

According to a study by Walker—a customer experience (CX) consulting firm—CX will be the brand differentiator over product and price by 2020.^[1] In other words, CX is quickly becoming the ultimate way to establish your organization as an industry leader. In fact, Forrester Research found that a company's revenue can increase significantly when its CX index score rises. According to its research, a 10-percentage-point improvement in a company's CX score—across industries—can translate into more than \$1 billion.^[2] On the other hand, we've all heard the horror stories about customers turning their backs on companies after just a single bad customer service experience.

The writing is on the wall: Handle CX well and your business stands to gain. However, fail to manage CX just right and you can severely hurt your reputation and bottom line.

Here are three mistakes to avoid so you capitalize on your CX opportunity rather than see it contribute to your downfall.

Mistake One:

Failing to Connect Contact Center and CSAT Metrics

Sometimes contact center executives are charged with seemingly separate objectives: Improve contact center performance and customer satisfaction (CSAT). Both are important for gauging quality. But it's possible to achieve high-quality performance scores and deliver a terrible customer experience. Let's explore how this can happen.

Many organizations decide it's critical to achieve low average handle time (AHT) and first contact resolution (FCR) rates. Reduce AHT and each agent handles more volume while your customers spend less time on hold or waiting for a chat agent. Lower AHT enough and you might be able to reduce contact center headcount—an operational win!

But are you compromising CX in the process? If your FCR metric declines in line with AHT, you are negatively impacting CX. Your customers are forced to get in touch multiple times to resolve their issues—leaving a bad taste in their mouths and driving your contact center productivity downward.

A lengthy AHT can be just as problematic. It could indicate that agents are struggling to access the right tools and information to answer the customer's question.

Wouldn't your customers—and agents—be happier if problems were quickly resolved on the first call? Rather than track your contact center and CSAT metrics separately, consider them one and the same. To that end, consider advice from DMG Consulting for contact center leaders. DMG recommends that you identify KPIs measuring the following activities: customer effort, customer satisfaction, revenue (sales and collections), agent effectiveness and engagement and agent productivity.

Mistake Two:

Going Multichannel Instead of Omnichannel

Fewer than half of organizations studied by Nemertes Research support web chat, click-to-call via websites or customer interactions directly through a mobile application or via social messaging. As this research advisory firm says, without these emerging channels, companies are flying blind when a customer contacts them. As a result, organizations can't optimize CX and customers suffer through longer processing times and mistakes.

In their efforts to address this pressing situation, many companies bolt on technologies to support each new channel. However, when each channel is handled independently of the others, customer-agent interactions aren't shared across channels. As a result, contact center agents lack all necessary information and context to effectively and efficiently serve each customer.

Some refer to multichannel and omnichannel interchangeably, but that's a mistake in itself. Multichannel refers to different communication options such as voice, chat, email and self-service, which are often accessed separately. Omnichannel, on the other hand, describes seamlessly integrated communication options that share data about all interactions.

Simply put, going omnichannel means enabling consistently stellar CX regardless of channel. It starts by equipping your agents to respond to customers based on their full history in any channel, and to pivot seamlessly from one to another, as needed.

Mistake Three:

Not Simplifying the Agent Experience

You may have deployed self-service options to satisfy customer demands for streamlined customer service. But when customers aren't able to solve their issues, they escalate to your contact center. As described above, they are most likely connecting with your contact center via an array of digital channels such as chat, mobile applications, SMS and even social media like Facebook Messenger.

How are you enabling that channel proliferation in the contact center? If your agents struggle with multiple systems that don't connect to each other, your customers will be frustrated when forced to repeat their issue and personal details. In their minds, this translates to an inconsistent experience with your company. According to Forrester Research, this leads to higher costs to serve your customers even while customer satisfaction drops.^[3]

Remember: in the midst of rising emphasis on CX and rising customer expectations, your agents are dealing with higher call volume and more complex issues. Wondering how this is impacting your agents? Ask them if they're feeling overloaded and isolated as they try their best to resolve customer issues.

If you're committed to delivering the ultimate customer experience, start by enabling the ultimate agent experience. A smart option is to embed your contact center solution directly within the agent's CRM interface, so interaction data is connected to each customer's record. This equips your agents with a full understanding of all customer interactions and issue details. With fewer clicks and applications to switch between, your agents will be more productive and accurate, even when supporting a higher number of interactions. More importantly, they'll feel well positioned to resolve any customer issue.

Pave the Way for the Best Customer Experience Possible

As a contact center executive, you need to manage many moving parts and keep pace with proven approaches that address the latest industry trends. By acting upon these three recommendations, you'll set your agents up to deliver CX that drives the best results for your customers and your business.

[1] Walker Information, Customers 2020

[2] Forrester Research, Transform The Contact Center For Customer Service Excellence, February 23, 2018

[3] Forrester Research, Transform The Contact Center For Customer Service Excellence, February 23, 2018

About Serenova

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